

threatens to veto; reforming welfare to get people back to work, to strengthen families and force deadbeat dads to pay support; and consolidate and eliminate other programs. So the tax relief is the dividend to the American people for Congress downsizing this Government.

Some oppose tax relief because they do not believe the American people can make better decisions on how to spend the money that they worked so hard to earn. The Republican Party puts faith in the American people and the States. I would not be rich but I would be wealthier than I am if I had a dollar for every time somebody on the other side of the aisle proclaimed that it was necessary for the Federal Government to make these decisions because we cannot trust the States.

Mr. President, you and I know it is a whole lot easier to influence directly the people at the State and local levels who are making the decisions than it is to get the Federal Government to slow down, to change direction and to begin moving in the right direction.

The opposition's bottom line is, support big Government. They do not want to see programs and agencies eliminated. But the bottom line is that the Government is the problem. As Bill Bennett, former Education Secretary said earlier this year in testimony before the Senate Budget Committee:

We have created a nanny state that takes too much from us in order to do too much for us. This has created inefficiency, sapped individual responsibility, and intruded on personal liberty.

Mr. President, I could not say it better. It is time for us to take a stand. Congress cannot duck its responsibility and neither can the President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senator from Tennessee has 15 minutes.

THE REPUBLICAN COMMITMENT TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I rise today to join my freshman Republican colleagues in discussing further the Republican commitment to the American people, initially made last year in the elections and carried through to today. We promised essentially four things: to balance the Federal budget, and to do that in 7 years; to end welfare as we know it; to save Medicare, to have the courage to save Medicare and, at the same time, as pointed out by my colleague from Arizona, to strengthen Medicare and preserve it for that next generation, and to not just put Band-Aids on a system that is literally hemorrhaging but to prepare that system and strengthen that system on into the next century; fourth, to reduce taxes in a way that provides relief to families with children, allowing them to keep some of the money they have earned in their own pockets, and to stimulate growth and generate jobs.

The bottom line is very clearly that the future of our Nation and the future of our children depends upon whether

we have the courage to balance the budget, to save Medicare, to strengthen Medicare, to end welfare as we know it, and to give some degree of tax relief.

The current path of this country leads to uncontrolled Federal spending and borrowing, skyrocketing annual deficits—\$200 to \$300 billion by the year 2000 and even higher deficits thereafter. In fact, the deficit spending increases approximately \$320,000 every minute, which means just in the short period of time that I have been talking, it has increased about a million dollars.

Our current path leads to another \$1.2 trillion added to our national debt. It is unacceptable. It will bring, by the year 2000, that debt to about \$6.7 trillion. Our current path, if we were to do nothing, leaves a Medicare Program that goes broke, a Medicaid Program that doubles in size, with no tax base that can support that.

Our current path, if we do nothing, leads to an enormous, unsustainable tax burden on young workers, on our children today, who will be forced to face an 82-percent tax burden over the course of their lives. Unless we do something, and do something courageously and aggressively, our current path will lead to the first generation of Americans in our history who have fewer opportunities than their parents.

What will happen if we balance the budget? The Senator from Arizona pointed out a number of interesting facts. Again, we have to face the truth. We have to return to see what the facts actually are. A lot of scare tactics are being used today—especially in the field of health care, against our seniors—which are in essence, I think, cruel. In that same debate, we have to come back to the facts of what can be accomplished, what the realities are today.

Similarly, by just balancing the budget, what are the facts? Economists calculate, again—everyone that has come through—that interest rates will fall incrementally by 1 to 2 percent once we balance the budget. The higher interest rate people pay today because of the debt means that people pay more for car loans, for mortgages, for credit card balances, and for equipment for their small businesses.

Thus, if we can balance the budget—and we need to do it within 7 years, again, with no phony numbers, but accurate numbers—we can do the following: lower interest rates, which to the average family will mean that they can save as much as \$1,200 each year on a \$75,000, 30-year mortgage. It means on the purchase of a car, say \$15,000, over the life of that loan a family will be able to keep \$1,000 additionally in their pocket to invest, put in their small business or to put in education. For a typical credit card balance of \$1,800—which is what it is in this country—an individual or family will save \$36 per year by just balancing the budget. Over the next 6 to 8 weeks, the blueprint will be out there. A family can save as much as \$1,100 over the life of a loan on

a small business or for a typical piece of farm equipment.

For business, lower interest rates will mean that businesses—by that, I mean small businesses—one- and two-person operations, as well as large businesses—will be able to grow because an investment will cost less. Profit margins will exist or be higher. Short-term loans will be less expensive. Inventories will cost less to store. Expansion will increase and innovation will be less costly.

By simply putting a blueprint out there in law over the next 6 to 8 weeks to balance the budget, we will also, in addition to allowing interest rates to come down, allow businesses to grow, new jobs to be created. And as businesses invest and grow and our Nation's output begins to rise, opportunities for every American will expand. According to recent studies, as many as 6 million new jobs—new jobs—will be created.

According to a well-known economic forecasting firm, if we balance the budget by the year 2002, the gross national product will be \$170 billion higher than if we do nothing and we do not balance the budget. That represents, overall, a 2.5-percent increase in productivity for businesses. That translates down to an average family's standard of living being increased by about \$1,000 a year.

What does it take? Courage. It takes us acting as elected representatives in a responsible way. The outcome of the budget battle will clearly determine in what direction our country will move for the remainder of this century, the next 6 years, but also well into the next. It will take the courage of each of us, the President of the United States, every Member of Congress, and every American citizen, to make sure that the direction we choose is the right one.

We will either have the courage to make tough choices, to face facts, so we can march into the future secure in the knowledge that the promise of America will be as bright for our children as it was for our parents.

The alternative is to sink deeper and deeper into debt, until the despair that many Americans now register in the polls will be justified. The President talks a lot about common ground today, but really what this country needs is common sense—common sense and the courage to carry out the blueprint.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. SANTORUM addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized.

THE MISSION BEFORE US

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I rise to join today with my freshman and sophomore colleagues to talk about the mission before us here in the next several weeks. We here in the Senate, and in the House, and the American public are now focused on the mission at hand, which is to try to balance

this budget over the next 7 years and come up with a plan for reforming a number of areas of Government.

It is, I think, one of the most important times in our country's history, certainly from a financial standpoint and a long-term economic security standpoint. I think this debate is as important as the debate that occurred during the Great Depression when we were trying to right the ship of state and preserve a long-term future during that crisis.

We are at a similar crisis, I believe, in our country's time, with the mountains of debt that we continue to pile up, and, really, no end is in sight. The fact is that we have over half of our Government on automatic pilot, spending money without any idea of how much it is going to go up. We have projections that Medicare is going to go up 10 percent a year, Medicare 8 percent a year, whatever the case may be. But we do not know what it is. We add up the bills at the end of the year and that is what we pay out.

Can you imagine a family or a business saying, well, half of the money we spend, we have absolutely no idea what it is going to be at the end of the year because we promised people we were going to pay these things, and whether we have enough money or not, it does not matter because we promised we were going to pay it. That is the insanity we are in that causes the deficits to be at this level—now almost \$5 trillion in the national debt.

We have an opportunity to do something about that now. It is really the first time since I have been in the Congress—I was in the House 4 years prior to coming to the Senate. This is the first chance I have had to seriously address the issue which, when I first got elected to the House of Representatives, I promised I would come down here and do—to do things differently, to put our fiscal house in order, to establish America—as many speakers here talked about the moral authority of a Government that lived within its means and understands that we cannot continue to tax and penalize and put through very difficult times, because of the excesses of today. I think we have that moral obligation to act from that perspective.

We also have an obligation, I think, a moral obligation, to act from the perspective that we promised. We promised back in 1994—and many of us who ran for office promised many times throughout our careers—we promised to come to Washington and seek to balance the budget.

It is not an easy thing to do. I think if it was easy, it would have been done a long time ago. It is difficult. I think the American public understands it is difficult. But we promised. We have a Contract With America that says we will balance the budget.

I think almost every Member on this side, and I know many Members on the other side when they ran for election talked about how crucial it was for the

long-term future of this country to get our fiscal house in order and to balance the budget. We promised.

You can put up all the arguments, charts, and graphs and say we should do this because it will help future generations, we are going to do this because it will lower interest rates or it will create more economic growth, or we will get rid of wasteful programs or create more freedom and opportunity, we will reform the welfare system, we will save Medicare.

Those are all very good reasons to balance the budget. All very good reasons why we should act on the reconciliation package that will be coming up in the next several weeks. I have listed only a few. There are innumerable reasons why we should balance this budget. Possibly paramount among all of those is the fact that we promised.

One thing I have heard from people, whether it is Democrats or Republicans, liberals or conservatives, the reason they are so disgruntled with government, whether it is at the State or national level, is there is a lack of trust that people who get elected actually follow through with what they promised when they run their campaigns. There is a dislink. There is the politician the candidate, and then the politician the elected official. What one says during the campaign does not jive with what one does when they are elected to office.

We elect leaders of this country who promise all sorts of things and come down and do exactly the opposite. Then you ask people, how can you support someone who does that? Well, they all do it. It does not make any difference. They all say what they need to say to get elected. But they all do it. Why is he or she any worse than the rest? We can forgive that, I guess.

I think those days are gone. I do not think the public will forgive that any more. I do not think they should forgive it in the first place, and I hope they do not. I think the least people should expect out of their elected representatives is they keep their promises. We made 10 promises in a Contract With America. I think probably paramount of all those promises was to balance the budget.

Promises are important. If people do not have faith in their elected officials and institutions, that erosion of faith in support of our Government has very long-term consequences to the future and safety and freedom of this country.

This is a big one. This is not a little white promise, a little white lie that we will tell. This is a big one. This is a major promise that we made to the American public.

I heard a preacher the other day tell the story about this subject—not the balanced budget—but about the importance of that trust. He talked of a man who headed up a college, I believe it was in South Carolina, a Bible college.

His father had started this school, and all throughout his life growing up

his dream was to succeed his father and run this school where people would have their avocation to become preachers and ministers. This was very important for him. He felt it was a calling from God to do this.

He did. He succeeded his father in that position and ran that college very, very well. Unfortunately, his wife of many years contracted Alzheimer's disease. Alzheimer's is a devastating disease that eventually deteriorates the mind to the point where a person is no longer able to take care of themselves and needs full-time care. This happened to this woman at a very young age, unfortunately. She did deteriorate to the point where she was simply not able to take care of herself and needed full-time care.

This husband, the man who had been called to run this college, this passion of his, decided to resign as president of the college, to take the time and spend the time to take care of his wife, who was a victim of Alzheimer's.

His friends and people on the board of the college came up to him and said:

Why are you doing this? She has Alzheimer's. She has no idea who you are. She has no idea who is taking care of her. Anyone can take care of her. Anyone can take care of her. You have a calling. You are serving the Lord. You are doing what you are good at. You may be the only one who can do this. How can you leave that to do something that anyone can do?

He said two things. First, he said: "She may not know who I am, but I know who she is and I promised her when we got married to be there until death do us part. I promised."

Promises mean something. Promises are important for relationships, for the future of this country, between its elected representatives and the people. We promised. Now it is time to deliver. I yield the floor.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I inquire of the Chair how much time is remaining on the time of the Senator from Wyoming?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time is 13 minutes 20 seconds.

RECONCILIATION

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I want to congratulate my freshman colleagues who have been on the floor the last hour. I think they have brought to the floor today an understanding of what this national debate that is going on is all about and what the debate that we will be having for the next few weeks in this Chamber is all about.

It is appropriate that the freshman Members, myself included, are making this debate today as we have in the past, because we were the ones who came through the last election and listened to what the American people had to say, as, of course, all our colleagues did. In a sense, we were a little closer to that.

My colleagues who preceded me today have talked very eloquently. I think if I could summarize, I would say